

**ENTERED**

December 14, 2015

David J. Bradley, Clerk

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
MCALLEN DIVISION

MELISSA FLORES ZUNIGA,	§
	§
Plaintiff,	§
VS.	§ CIVIL ACTION NO. 7:15-CV-408
	§
GREAT LAKES REINSURANCE (UK)	§
PLC,	§
	§
Defendant.	§

**ORDER**

Pending before the Court is “Defendant’s Motion to Appear Telephonically,”<sup>1</sup> filed by Defendant on December 10, 2015. Because the motion is unopposed, the Court considers it as soon as practicable.<sup>2</sup> In his motion, Defendant’s counsel Jack Kauffman requests leave to appear by phone for the initial pretrial conference, currently scheduled for December 15, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. As cause for the request, counsel explains that he is traveling for another matter which may “require his absence to extend into the week of December 14, 2015.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, counsel states any “last minute” transportation arrangement undertaken to be present in court on December 15, 2015 would be “extremely expensive.”<sup>4</sup>

The Court disfavors telephonic appearances without extenuating circumstances, finding that in-person attendance materially furthers case progress. Defendant’s counsel has not shown extenuating circumstances and only offers that he is traveling. Additionally, the attorney-in-

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<sup>1</sup> Dkt. No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> In the Certificate of Conference, Defendant’s counsel states Plaintiff is unopposed. L.R. 7.2.

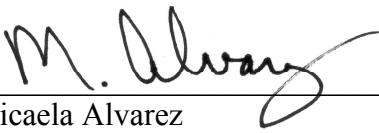
<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

charge in this case is Les Pickett and Holly Sheffield<sup>5</sup> is also counsel of record. The conference was scheduled almost four months prior to the filing of the instant motion,<sup>6</sup> giving Defendant's counsel ample time to prepare to appear in this Court. Accordingly, the Court **DENIES** the motion.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DONE at McAllen, Texas, this 14th day of December, 2015.



Micaela Alvarez  
United States District Judge

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<sup>5</sup> Although Holly Sheffield has filed a motion to withdraw, the Court has not yet granted such motion. *See* Dkt. No. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *See* Dkt. No. 3 (scheduling order issued on September 28, 2015).